

## As School Begins

Ready or not, it is time to begin another school year. It is an exciting time for kids, parents, and teachers. If you find yourself in one of these three categories, it is my earnest prayer that this coming school year will prove to be a time of joy, achievement, and prosperity for you. I pray that God will keep you safe, physically and spiritually. I pray that you will shine as children of light.

As the school year begins, I would like to encourage each to consider where you will put school in your hierarchy of priorities. How you will deal with the various pressures? School work and activities are important and you should do your best (Ecclesiastes 9:10). But you need to put God first. First place cannot be shared with anyone or anything (Matthew 22:37). If you are not to love your spouse, parents, or children more than the Lord, then you are not to love school work or activities more than the Lord (Luke 14:26-27).

Many will face pressure to put schoolwork or activities above service to God. Pressure to miss services for athletic contests, homework, or some type of practice is a real temptation. Parents and students should remember that there will be no history or math questions on heaven's entrance exam. Athletic or musical ability will not determine one's admission. You will do what you want most. What will your choices reveal to God?

Whether you are going back to school as a student, teacher, bus driver, nurse, or secretary, determine to shine your light! Have the courage to speak out and speak up. You have a unique opportunity to show others Christ living in you. As others observe your chaste and respectful behavior, they can be drawn to the Lord. Your godly example and well-chosen words can change the eternal destiny of those around you.

Adapted From John Smith